

CITY MARKET HOUSE

HABS NO. 24- 14

RICHMOND, INDIANA

Wagner Co.

HABS
IND
89 RICH,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District No. 24

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
HERBERT W. FOLTZ, DISTRICT OFFICER
1034 Architects Building, Indianapolis

MARKET HOUSE
RICHMOND, INDIANA
HABS NO.24-14

Completed December, 1855

Planned by James M. Smith

Built by John A. McMinn

Dimensions: 24 ft. x 100 ft. x 12 ft. with
6 ft. Roof projection

Brick construction- paved with Paris stone.

Original cost - \$1,509.05

In 1856 the building was equipped with stalls for butcher's market and farmers with produce set up their stands outside and sold from their wagons. The building is as originally built, though the door openings have been partly bricked up, new metal-clad doors in metal frames have been substituted for the old doors, and recent repairs and painting as a CWA project have modernized it in many respects. There have been new roofs but the old roof framing still remains.

Has always been and is still the property of the city of Richmond.

-From records in the office of the City Clerk as reported by E. M. Haas in the RICHMOND PALLADIUM AND SUN-TELEGRAPH, Dec. 21, 1933.

(See note book for complete text of report)

(Signed)

John P. Kelley
Squad Leader

March 1934.

Approved

Herbert H. C. Tolch
DISTRICT OFFICER

Market House Built In 1855



F. M. HAAS

The question has often been asked the writer as to when the Richmond market house was built, but we were not prepared to answer definitely until now.

We asked a great many people who are more than 80 years old, but all of them had the same answer, "It was there as long as we can remember anything."

It was evident that we must look to other sources. We examined transfers in the county recorders office. We found that the market house lot was purchased by the city from Nathan Morgan in 1853 for \$2,250 and gave five bonds, payable one each year for five years for the purchase price.

It would appear that this was a pretty good price for ground, without improvements. It extended from Fifth to Sixth streets and there was one building on it, a stone house stood at the corner of Fifth street, which was used for an orphan's home.

The record of the building of the market house had to be dug out of the minutes in the city clerk's office, and as the minutes are not indexed it is necessary to read them covering a number of years. The ground was purchased for the building of a market house, but it was not undertaken until two years later. A committee was appointed in August, 1855 to prepare plans and submit them to council. At the meeting in Aug. 23, Councilman William T. Dennis, chairman of this committee submitted a plan prepared by James M. Smith for a house 100 feet long, 24 feet wide and 12 feet high, with roof projecting six feet over the sidewalk, and the floor to be paved with Paris stone, all to be finished in 90 days. Smith proposed to build this for \$1,500 and take the city's bonds for that amount, payable \$500 per year at 6 percent interest. A motion was made that Mr. Smith be awarded the contract.

Suggests Competition

After some discussion, James M. Starr suggested that the matter be advertised and let to the lowest bidder. Mr. Smith objected and stated that if the contract was not given to him that evening he would not be a bidder. Mr. Starr, however, had him consent to a signed agreement, that if they did not find a lower bidder within a week he would agree to build. Advertisement was published in the Palladium and the Jeffersonian, and bids were received from six bidders. The amounts were not stated but the bidders were M. G. Arnold, John A. McMinn, T. G. Thompson, F. Macke, B. Stambush, and John Veregge. On Sept. 1 the contract was let to the lowest bidder and John McMinn secured it. An item in the annual report showed expenditure for the building of the market house of \$1,509.05.

The market house was built and completed in December, 1855. In the building there were no stalls or equipment. We find an item in 1856 where the council authorized an expenditure of \$50 to equip the house for the use of butchers. We are told that for years the inside of the market was used by butchers exclusively, and farmers with produce set up stands on the sidewalk, or sold direct from their springwagons as shown in the picture.

At the time the house was built John Finley was mayor; Ben Davis, of the Palladium, city clerk; John Suffrins, treasurer; William Zimmerman, marshal; councilmen were J. R. Mendenhall, Thomas Roberts, Samuel Lyndes, J. H. Hutton, Lewis Burk, James M. Starr, W. T. Dennis and James M. Smith. These were all prominent men who laid foundations for our city when the population was less than 3,000. The first railroad had just been built, the old rail fence of the Roberts farm came down to Eleventh and Main streets, and the courthouse was still in Centerville. The first public school house was built at the same time as the market house on North Eighth street.

The building of the present market house in 1855 was not the first public market of the city. Owing to the absence of records for the time that the village was unincorporated, and the absence of regularly kept newspaper files, we were unable to locate any of the places where such markets were kept. We know that there were such markets, as in the first minutes of the council after the town was incorporated in 1839, an estimate of receipts for market stalls was \$50 for the year. In 1844 we find that stalls sold at \$3 a piece and in 1846, William Brady, chairman of a committee to investigate the condition of the market house reported that "They found the house in a very filthy condition, entirely unfit for holding market in."

Purchases Lot

We also find a minute in 1854 where Lewis Burk, proposes to buy a lot set apart for a public market, at the corner of Seventh and North A streets for the purpose of building a Lutheran church. The same was sold to him by the city for \$450. This was the year after the city had bought the lot for a market site from Nate Morgan. The Lutherans built the church on this lot and it still stands there. It was sold in later years to St. Mary's Catholic church who held services there until 1913 when their new church was completed. We cannot ascertain whether this lot was used for market purposes. It was used for out door assemblies. The Henry Clay meeting was there and it has become a place marked by a monument where this incident of national importance took place.

The architecture of the present market house was never changed since it was first constructed in 1855. When the civic work program made it possible to repair it and paint it, it was again brought to an attractive state with its bright colors and new lighting, as it must have appeared to citizens 79 years ago. A few new bricks had to be inserted where old ones had crumbled, but otherwise you will find the walls and timbers the same that were placed there in the beginning. Compare the price paid for the building when it was erected, \$1,500 and the probable estimate of such a building today.